

September 16, 2010

WASHINGTON – United States Senator Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., and Congressman Charlie Melancon, D-La.03, today announced that they have secured key commitments from the U.S. Navy to help protect thousands of jobs at Avondale shipyard in greater New Orleans.

The Navy will make public tomorrow its plans to move up construction of double-hulled tankers from 2017 to 2014 and the guarantee that two LPD ships currently under construction at Avondale will be completed there. That requirement will ensure thousands of jobs at Avondale through 2013. The new timeline for constructing double-hulled tankers would provide an opportunity for Avondale to compete for new contracts beginning in 2014, making the facility more attractive to prospective new shipbuilding buyers.

**“As one of only five major shipyards in the nation, Avondale should play a key role in the future of Navy shipbuilding,”** Sen. Landrieu said. **“While today’s announcement is not a silver bullet, it is a small step in the direction of making Avondale viable years into the future. We are encouraged by this commitment that Secretary Mabus is making to South Louisiana. Moving up the allocation funds to build these tankers by three years will allow Avondale to maintain its highly-skilled workforce through 2013. We will continue to press the Navy to increase the shipbuilding workload at Avondale and pursue private shipbuilding opportunities as a long-term solution to preserving these 5,000 jobs.”**

**“The Navy’s plan offers some hope for saving thousands of good-paying jobs in south Louisiana by attracting a new manufacturer to the Avondale site,”** said Rep. Melancon. **“Senator Landrieu and I have been working to relay the concerns of Avondale’s workers to the Secretary of the Navy, and I am pleased we are making some progress. Avondale’s greatest asset has always been its hardworking, highly-skilled workforce, and I am confident new opportunities are on the horizon for them and their families in Louisiana.”**

In July, Sen. Landrieu sent a letter to Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus asking the Navy to begin construction of the military’s double-hulled tankers before 2017. Today’s announcement fulfilled the request Sen. Landrieu made in her July letter. Yesterday, Congressman Melancon met with representatives of the workers at Avondale to discuss strategies for saving the shipyard jobs after Northrop Grumman departs.

The Navy also announced funding for two South Louisiana colleges to train highly skilled shipyard workers. The funds include:

- \$10 million to continue education and training programs at Delgado Community College so that an apprenticeship program stays open. A portion of the \$10 million will also be devoted to marine engineering and architecture programs at the University of New Orleans.
- \$6 million to invest in infrastructure at Louisiana shipyards. These funds will allow shipyards to re-hire laid off workers.

This week, Sen. Landrieu also secured a commitment from Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel Inouye to work together with Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman

Carl Levin on language that could be included in the Defense Authorization Bill that would significantly improve Avondale's competitiveness in bidding for business in building the double-hulled tankers.

For a copy of the full letter to Sec. Mabus, please visit: [http://landrieu.senate.gov/mediacenter/upload/10.07.15\\_Letter.pdf](http://landrieu.senate.gov/mediacenter/upload/10.07.15_Letter.pdf)

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